



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

## DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Alpha Battery, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 79<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery  
434<sup>th</sup> Training Brigade  
FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA 73503-5000

10 February 2016

Commander, Alpha Battery, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 79<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery

Dear Parents, Family Members, and Friends:

The Soldiers of Alpha Battery are proving their toughness every day. They are motivated, fit, knowledgeable, and ready to graduate! Before they do, however, there are still a couple more weeks of rigorous necessary training.

This is the time of the cycle when families are anxious to make their travel plans to see their Soldier graduate. This letter will provide you with information in order to make your travel plans. You may want to consider not making your travel purchases until you have heard from your Soldier that they will graduate. If you have not heard from your Soldier regarding their ineligibility to graduate, you may assume that they are. We will make every effort to have your Soldier contact you when it is confirmed. However, I cannot guarantee who they will call. They may call their significant other, or a friend and fail to notify you (the family member). This is beyond my control. Please do not contact the battery asking whether or not your Soldier has graduated. No news is good news! When you make your travel plans, please keep in mind travel time to the airports; approximately 1.5 hours from Oklahoma City to the Fort Sill area and 20 minutes from the Lawton Regional Airport.

It is recommended that if you are purchasing plane tickets, that you purchase refundable tickets. There have been several instances in the past where I have chosen not to let Soldiers graduate for one reason or another.

If your Soldier is having trouble passing his/her physical fitness tests, they will be given at least two extra attempts. These extra attempts are during weeks 8 and 9 of Basic Training. You will not receive notice from the Soldier until they have failed the last make up test. In the past, this has caused issues with friends and families, as these Soldiers were not allowed to graduate and it was too late to change the plans of the families. Therefore, the families still came and attended graduation but did not get to see their Soldier walk across the stage. I cannot stress enough the importance of making refundable travel plans.

While you are here, we ask that you help preserve historical Fort Sill. Please wear appropriate attire. There is no dress code, but vulgar or distasteful slogans or exposures are not accepted for these family events. All civilian and military personnel entering Fort Sill must have a valid state issued driver's license or military ID at the gate with the provided gate pass. If for some reason you never received the vehicle pass you will need to apply for one at the Visitor Control Center prior to entering the Sheridan road Gate. All personally owned vehicles are subject to search by Fort Sill Police. Personally owned firearms are **not allowed** on Fort Sill **or at the graduation facility.**

**Larger bag's, parcels, backpacks will not be permitted at these events.** Use of cellular phones while driving on Fort Sill is strictly prohibited. Please cooperate with these measures.

The Family Day Ceremony will begin at 10:00 a.m. on March 10, 2016 at Destroyer Park Fort Sill, OK 73503 (See map for more details). Family Day highlights your Soldier's achievements over the basic combat training cycle through a series of demonstrations on weapons, tactics, drill and ceremony, and physical fitness. Then, I will provide essential information on the pass policies for the Family Day and Graduation. At the conclusion of this ceremony, your Solider may be released on pass. Remember to dress warmly!

The Graduation Ceremony will begin at 1:00 PM on March 11, 2016 at the McMahon Auditorium 801 NW Ferris AVE. Lawton, OK 73507. During the ceremony, please feel free to take pictures of your Solider as they graduate. The graduating class will be seated together and will not have an opportunity to socialize during this time. If you arrive early, you will not be permitted to enter the facility. Ensure that you arrive on time.

Here are the timelines for the Family Day and Graduation:

Family Day: March 10, 2016 (It will be an outside event and cold! Dress warmly)

09:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Arrival for the Family Day Activities

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Family Day Ceremony

11:00 a.m. – 7:45 p.m. Pass Privileges

8:00 p.m. Accountability Formation

Graduation: March 10, 2016

12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Doors Open and Seating in the McMahon Auditorium

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Graduation Ceremony

2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. 13/14 MOS Series Soldiers Travel back to Battery

2:30 p.m. - 7:45 p.m. Pass Privileges

7:50 p.m. Accountability Formation back at the Battery

Immediately following the graduation, we will transport the Soldiers back to the battery headquarters to release the Soldiers on pass. Soldiers remaining at Fort Sill (13 series MOSs) will ship to their respective AIT unit before their release for pass. 13 series Soldier will ship to 1-78 FA BN at 2:30 p.m. The families and friends of 13 series Soldiers need to attend a brief to sign their Soldiers out on pass at 3:00 p.m. at 1-78 FA BN Headquarters at (BLDG 2735 Bragg Street, Fort Sill, OK 73503). This pass has historically been a weekend pass, requiring Soldiers to sign back in to their gaining unit on Sunday night. I cannot promise that this will be the case, so try to make your plans as flexible as you can.

Soldiers with follow on assignments at different posts will be released after graduation from the battery headquarters but must report back at 7:45 p.m. for

accountability. These Soldiers will be shipped that night to their follow on assignments. Soldiers will travel by government arranged travel to their follow on assignments.

I hope you enjoy your visit to the Lawton/Fort Sill Area. Lawton/Fort Sill offers a vast array of attractions. As you may know, Fort Sill is located in southwest Oklahoma and is surrounded by the Wichita Mountains. If you take a drive through the Wichita Mountains, you can visit several tourist sites such as Mount Scott, the Holy City, and the Wildlife refuge Center. In Lawton, you can enjoy the Great Plains Museum and enjoy some entertainment. On Fort Sill, you can tour Geronimo's Guard House and Gravesite, the Old Post Quadrangle Museum, and the U.S. Army Field Artillery Museum and while you are here, you might check out the Lake Elmer Thomas Recreation Area.

You can find additional information about local hotels and restaurants in the Lawton/Fort Sill area at the Chamber of Commerce website: <http://www.lawtonfortsillchamber.com/>. Additional information can be found at <http://sill-www.army.mil/INDEX/maps/> and <http://sill-www.army.mil/>.

You can contact me via telephone at any time at the following number (580) 442-1308 or the following email address [alphathunder179@gmail.com](mailto:alphathunder179@gmail.com). On behalf of the Battery Cadre and Drill Sergeants, we look forward to meeting you at graduation.

**Peace Through Victory!**

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Truax  
CPT, MI  
Commanding